

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 and 23-29 are all the claims pending in the application. Support for new claim 29 may be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, in original claims 1 and 24.

Prior to addressing the Examiner's specific rejections, Applicants submit the following comments. The comments are provided to the Examiner for the purposes of assisting the Examiner in understanding the claimed invention and the differences between the claimed invention and the cited art.

It appears that the Examiner regards the sheet size as a simple optional term and is not giving the sheet size any patentable weight. However, Applicants respectfully submit that for the present invention, the fact that the claimed sheet size is 515 x 728 mm or more (B2 format or larger) is of patentable significance. In cases where the image receiving sheet and the thermal transfer sheet are small in size, there is no problem as for vacuum adhesion, transportability and transfer to actual printing paper. However, once the sheet size becomes as large, such as B2 or larger, various problems occur. Regarding vacuum adhesion, the vacuum adhesion property becomes extremely poor along with the sheet size increase due to the formation of an air-filled cavity in the central region of the sheet. Further, regarding transportability, electrostatic charging becomes prominent along with size increase, and, at the same time, the distance between pass rolls is expanded and jamming is liable to occur. Still further, as for the transfer onto an actual

printing paper, the roll temperature is liable to lower with the increase of the sheet size. Accordingly, the heater is cooled and thus, even if the transfer onto an actual printing paper is well accomplished in the front half of the sheet, wrinkles tend to develop in the rear half of the sheet, or sheet jamming takes place. In cases where both of the temperature and the pressure are high, jamming easily occurs. In other words, recording methods of the type involved here, which may be free of any problem for sheet sizes from A4 to A2, may be accompanied by various problems when using a sheet size is equal to or greater than size B2. Accordingly, the claimed the sheet size of B2 or larger is of patentable significance for the present invention.

I. The Rejection Based on Japanese Patent Publications No. 2001/310491 and No. 2001/328287

Claims 1-20 and 23-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the combination of Japanese Publications 2001/310491 and 2001/328287.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not anticipated by or obvious over the disclosures of Japanese Publications 2001/310491 and 2001/328287 and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection in view of the following remarks.

As discussed above, independent claim 1 of the present invention recites a size of 515 x 728 mm or more. Japanese Patent Publication No. 2001/310491 states in paragraph [0051] that the size is A4, which differs from that claimed in the present invention.

Japanese Patent Publication No. 2001/328287 states in a paragraph [0090] that the image-receiving sheet has a size of 25 cm x 35 cm, and that the thermal transfer sheet has a size of 30 cm x 40 cm. These sizes also differ from the size claimed in the present invention.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that, even if the cited references are combined, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select the claimed paper size.

In Wachi et al, the image-receiving sheet is 25 cm x 35 cm in size and the thermal transfer sheet is 30 cm x 40 cm in size (Wachi et al, column 33, lines 44 to 50). These sizes do not fall within the claimed size range defined by the present invention.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1-20 and 23-38 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of Japanese Publications 2001/310491 and 2001/328287 and it is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. The Rejections Based on U.S. Patent No. 6,326,121 and Japanese Patent Publication 2001/355177

Claims 1-20 and 23-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Takahashi et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,326,121).

Claims 1-20 and 23-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication 2001/355177 to Takahashi.

In Takahashi et al '121 the image-receiving sheet is 25 cm in size and the thermal transfer sheet is 30 cm x 40 cm in size (Takahashi et al '121, column 22, lines 2 to 12). These sizes do not fall within the claimed size range of the present invention.

In Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000/355177, the image-receiving sheet is 25 cm x 35 cm in size and the thermal transfer sheet is 30 cm x 40 cm in size (Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000/355177, ¶[0090]). These sizes do not fall within the claimed size range of the present invention.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1-20 and 23-28 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of Takahashi et al U.S. Patent No. 6,326,121 and Japanese Patent Publication 2001/355177 and it is requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

III. The Rejection Based on Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al

Claims 1 to 14, 20 and 23 to 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al.

Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al do not contain any description of their sheet size. However, by taking into account the dates of the application for Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al, Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would consider that the sizes of the sheets of Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al would be those set forth in the other cited art and that the sizes do not fall within the claimed size range of the present invention.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1 to 14, 20 and 23 to 28 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of Yamamoto et al and Tsuno et al and it is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that their claimed invention is allowable and ask that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 be reconsidered and withdrawn. Applicants respectfully submit that this case is in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully solicited.

If any points remain at issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the local exchange number listed below.

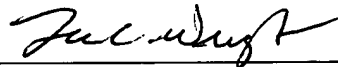
Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case. The USPTO is directed and authorized to

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AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111

charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit

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Respectfully submitted,



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